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**EARLY LIFE
OF
WASHINGTON.**



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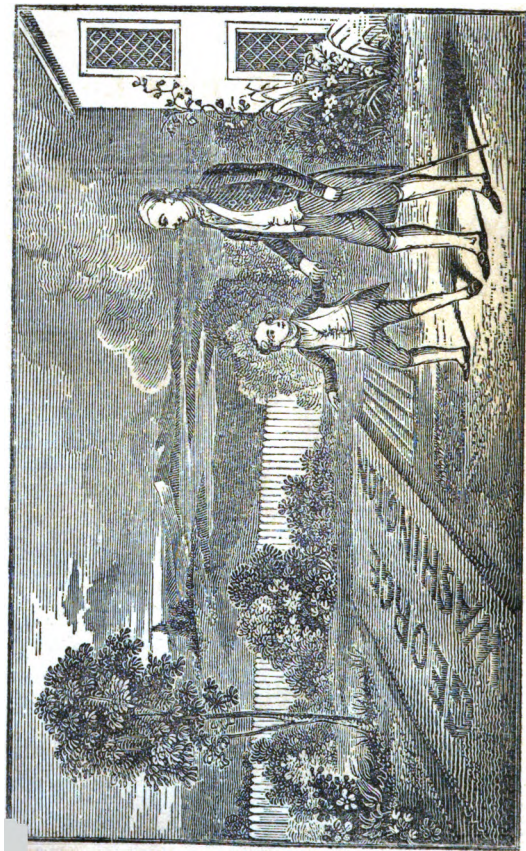
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J. P. MacLean,

Cincinnati.

Feb. 19, 1857.

WASHINGTON.



THE
EARLY LIFE
OF
WASHINGTON;
DESIGNED FOR THE
INSTRUCTION AND AMUSEMENT
OF
THE YOUNG.

By a Friend of Youth.

PROVIDENCE:
KNOWLES, VOSE AND COMPANY.
1838.

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TO THE READER.

The following is a narrative of him, who has been justly styled "The Father of his Country." It comprises the first twenty-seven years of his life. Though this is the least brilliant portion of Washington's life, it is a *valuable* portion of it; because it exhibits those traits of character which laid the foundation of his future greatness, and are worthy the attention and imitation of youth.

The author, in remarking that he has drawn his information from the most authentic sources, acknowledges his obligations to the works of Weems, Ramsay, Marshall, and M'Guire, and especially to the valuable notes and observations of Sparks.

THE EARLY LIFE OF WASHINGTON.

CHAPTER FIRST.

Washington's birth—his ancestors—the first school he attended—family anecdotes—death of his father.

GEORGE WASHINGTON was born in Virginia, on the 22d of February, 1732. The particular place of his birth was Pope's Creek, Washington parish, in the county of Westmoreland. The name of his great grandfather was John Washington, who came from the north of England and settled on Pope's Creek, in Virginia, in the year 1655. He afterwards married Miss Pope, the daughter of the gentleman from whom the Creek took its name. John Washington is believed to have been a military man in early life. His will, now at Mount Vernon, is endorsed thus: "The will of Lieutenant Colonel Washington." This will contains a small bequest to the church, and affords evidence that he was a pious man. As the parish in which he lived has always borne his name, he was probably very instrumental in establishing it.

John Washington had three children, Lawrence, John and Ann. Lawrence Washington, the oldest son and the grandfather of George, inherited the Pope's Creek farm.—Augustin Washington, the son of Lawrence and the father of George, was born in the year 1694. He was probably the eldest son of Lawrence, as he inherited the patrimonial estate at Pope's Creek.

Augustin Washington was married twice. His first wife was Jane Butler, by whom he had four children, viz. Butler, Lawrence, Augustin, jun. and Jane. Butler and Jane died young. Lawrence and Augustin lived to be men. The second wife was Mary Ball, a young lady of highly respectable family in the northern part of Virginia.—George was the first fruit of this union. He was the oldest of six children, viz. George, Elizabeth, Samuel, John Augustin, Charles and Mildred. Mildred died very young.—George was baptized April the 5th, 1732.

The church of England was then almost the only denomination of christians in the colony of Virginia. The parents of George Washington were members of this church, and brought up their family in the habit of regular attendance on public worship.

The first school that George attended, was kept by Mr. Hobby, an elderly man, who was both the school master and the sexton of the parish. By this old' man, the father of his country was first taught to read. Although George's father sent him to this school, he took upon himself the oversight of his education, and the pleasing duty of early instilling into his mind the principles of piety and virtue. His manner of doing this appears by the following anecdotes, which were related to the Rector of Mount Vernon Parish, by a venerable lady now deceased, who, as a friend and relative, spent many of her youthful days in the family.

One fine morning in the autumn of 1737, Mr. Washington, having George, then five years old, by the hand, came to the door and invited cousin Washington and myself to walk with them to the orchard, promising to show us a fine sight. On arriving at the orchard, we were presented with a fine sight indeed. The ground, as far as we could see, was covered with mellow apples, and yet the trees were bending under the weight of their fruit. "George," said his father, "don't you remember, my son, when this good cousin of yours brought you that fine large apple, last spring, that I could hardly

prevail upon you to divide it with your brothers and sisters? And don't you remember I then told you we ought to be generous to each other because the Almighty is so bountiful to us?" Poor George could not say a word, but hanging down his head, looked quite confused. "Now look around, my son," continued his father, "and see how kindly the Almighty has treated us, and learn from this how we ought to treat our fellow creatures." George looked a while in silence on the abundance of fruit before him, then lifting his eyes to his father, he said, with emotion, "Well, father, only forgive me this time, and see if I am ever so stingy any more."

Mr. Augustine Washington took great pains early to inspire his son George with the love of truth. The following anecdote shows that his endeavors were not without success.

When George was about six years old, he became the owner of a hatchet, with which, like most other little boys, he was very much delighted. He went about chopping every thing that came in his way. One day, in the garden, he unluckily tried the edge of his hatchet upon the body of a beautiful young English cherry tree, which

he cut so badly that the tree never recovered from the injury. The next morning his father seeing what had befallen the tree, which, by the by, was a great favorite with him, came into the house, and with much warmth, asked who had done the mischief, declaring at the same time, that he would not have taken five guineas for the tree.—Nobody could tell him any thing about it. Presently George and his hatchet made their appearance. “George,” said his father, “do you know who cut that beautiful cherry tree yonder in the garden?” George was taken by surprise. He hesitated for a moment; but he soon recovered himself.—Looking at his father, he said, “I will not tell a lie, father, I cut it with my hatchet.” The delighted father, embracing his child, said, “No matter about the tree, George; you have frankly told me the truth. Though you saw I was offended, you were not afraid to do right. The pleasure I enjoy to witness this noble conduct in my son is of more value to me than a thousand such trees.”

Mr. Washington took the following method to impress upon his son the existence and wisdom of God from the evidence of design in his works.

On a bed in the garden, well prepared for the purpose, he traced with a stick the letters of his son's name. He then very carefully sowed seed in the small furrows made by the stick, covered it over and smoothed the ground nicely with a roller. In a few days the seed came up, and exhibited in large letters, the words **GEORGE WASHINGTON**.— They soon caught the eye for which they were intended. Again and again the astonished boy read his name, springing up from the earth, fresh and green. He ran to his father and exclaimed, "O father! come here! come with me and I will show you such a sight as you never saw in all your life." Eagerly seizing his father's hand, he tugged him along through the garden to the spot. "Look there, father," said he, "did you ever see such a sight before?" "It is a curious affair, indeed, George." "But, father, who made my name there?" "It grew there, my son." "I know it grew there, but who made the letters so as to spell my name?" "Did they not grow so by chance, my son?" "O no, sir, they never grew so by chance." "Why not, my son?" "Nobody," said George, "ever saw a single letter grow up by chance; and how could a whole name grow up so even and be spelled so

exactly right by chance? Somebody planted it so." "That is true, George. I planted it so," said Mr. Washington, and showed him how he did it. "Now, George, if letters could not grow so as to spell your name by chance, how could the world and all the things and creatures in it be made so exactly suited to each other and to some useful purpose, by chance?"

Thus happily and profitably to young Washington passed the days of his earliest years. Mr. Washington's family government was steady and reasonable; his treatment of his children was kind and affectionate. George was an intelligent boy and a dutiful son. Never were parent and child more strongly attached. But, in the providence of God, only a few years more were to be allowed them for the enjoyment of each others society, on earth.

About the year 1739, when George was about seven years old, his father removed from his estate on Pope's Creek to a farm which he owned in Stafford county, on the Rappahannock river, directly opposite to Fredericksburg.

Lawrence Washington, the elder of George's two half-brothers, became of age in 1739, and soon afterwards received a

Captain's commission in a regiment raised in America, and served with the British forces in the unsuccessful siege of Carthage, conducted by Admiral Vernon and General Wentworth. Having been absent in the army about two years, Captain Washington returned to Virginia. A few months after his return, his father was taken ill.—George was then on a visit to some of his acquaintances, living in Chotanct, in King George county, about twenty miles from his father's residence. Mr. Washington was at first unwilling to interrupt George in the enjoyment of his visit; but after his sickness became alarming, George was sent for, and reached home but just in time to receive the parting blessing of his beloved father. He died on the 12th of April, 1743, at the age of forty-nine years. George was then eleven years old.

CHAPTER SECOND.

Family anecdote—George lives with his half-brother Augustine about three years, and attends Mr. William's school—his manuscript book of forms—his rules of behavior.

About this time, Captain Lawrence Washington married Ann, the daughter of Mr. William Fairfax, a relation of Lord Thomas Fairfax,

Mr. Augustine Washington left his estate on the river Potomac, in Fairfax county, to his eldest son, Lawrence, who called it Mount Vernon, in honor of Admiral Vernon. He left his estate at Pope's Creek to his second son, Augustine. Mrs. Augustine Washington and her family continued to reside on the farm near Fredericksburg.— Upon her now devolved the care of the plantation. Her first born son, George, continued to live with her some months after his father's death. During this period, a circumstance happened which shows that George, though a good boy on the whole, was not wholly exempt from youthful rashness. His mother owned a beautiful colt, which, never having been broken, was remarkably wild. George delighted to look at this colt as he pranced about the pasture, snuffing up the wind, wheeling and halting and displaying his fine proportions. He often wished himself upon the colt's back. One day he engaged some of his school companions to come early the next morning and help him to take a ride before breakfast.— They came, and found the colt at no great distance from the house. After a great deal of difficulty they contrived to corner him and put a bridle upon him. Several boys

held the bridle while George leaped upon his back. A violent struggle followed.—The horse seemed determined to shake off his rider, and his rider seemed equally determined to keep his seat. At length the noble animal, in the fury of his plunges, fell headlong and burst a blood vessel. This killed him instantly. George received no injury by the fall; but when he saw the poor creature lie dead, and considered his mother's attachment to the animal, he began to look very serious. The call to breakfast was soon heard. Some of George's companions had been invited to take breakfast with him that morning. The boys were all remarkably silent at the table. Whether Mrs. Washington had any suspicions that all was not right, is uncertain. But she inquired if they had seen any thing of her fine sorrel colt, in their rambles. Neither of the boys replied to this question. She repeated it. There was now no escape.—George's character for truth and frankness had been tried when he was much younger. It did not then fail; it must not now fail. "Your sorrel colt is dead, mother," replied George. "Dead, George!" exclaimed Mrs. Washington, with surprise. "Yes, he is dead." "How came he dead, George?"—

"I will tell you, mother. I am the one in fault." He then related all the circumstances just as they happened. "I very much regret the loss of my colt," said Mrs. Washington; "but I rejoice to hear my son frankly tell the truth, without showing any disposition to cast his own faults upon others."

Soon after this occurrence, George was sent to Pope's Creek, the place of his nativity, to live with his half-brother Augustine. The chief object of sending him there was that he might have the benefit of a respectable school in the neighborhood, kept by a Mr. Williams. He remained with his half brother and attended that school about three years. An old gentleman, who was one of Mr. Williams's scholars at that time, has often said that such was George's reputation for truth, impartiality and good judgment among his school mates, that they were continually referring their disputes to him, and so great was their confidence in him, that his decisions were seldom called in question. He said nothing was more common, when the boys were in high dispute about some question of fact, than for one of them to call out, "Well, boys, George Washington was there! George Washington

was there ! He knows all about it ; and if he don't say it was so, why then we will give it up."

Though George Washington was naturally of a resolute and martial spirit, he was habitually gentle and obliging in his conduct. He never quarrelled with his companions ; and he would always endeavor to settle their quarrels with each other. If he could not calm their passions and prevent their fighting by his arguments, he would inform the instructor of their barbarous intentions ; though by doing so he often brought upon himself their censure at the time.

At Mr. Williams's school, George was taught Arithmetic, English Grammar, Book Keeping, Surveying and Geography.* He wrote his school exercises in arithmatic and geometry in a remarkably neat, fair hand. The number and accuracy of his geometrical figures, shows the strong bent of his inclination to mathematical studies. When he was thirteen years old, he began a manuscript book, which he entitled "*Forms of Writing.*" In it he copied out with great care and exactness, forms of different kinds used in the transaction of business, such as

* Weems.

a note of hand, a bill of exchange, a bond, an indenture, a lease, a will. Then follow two or three select pieces of poetry. Among them are "Lines on True Happiness."—Then follow a collection of a hundred and ten maxims, written out and numbered.—These he entitles "*Rules of civility and proper behavior in company and conversation.*" He does not mention from what source he derived these rules. They seem well calculated to improve the manners and morals of a young person, and no doubt had a favorable influence in forming the future deportment and character of Washington. The following is a selection from these rules.

1. Every action in company ought to be respectful to those present.
2. In the presence of others sing not to yourself with a humming noise, nor drum with your fingers or feet.
3. Sit not while others are standing; speak not when you should hold your peace; walk not on when others stop.
4. Turn not your back to others, especially in speaking; jog not the table or desk on which another is reading or writing; lean not on any one.
5. Be no flatterer.
6. Read no letters, books or papers in company, unless there is necessity for doing it, and then ask leave.

Come not near the books or writings of any one, so as to read them, unless desired; nor give your opinion of them unasked: also look not nigh when another is writing a letter.

7. Let your countenance be pleasant, but in serious matters somewhat grave.

8. Show not yourself glad at the misfortunes of another, though he were your enemy.

9. When you meet a superior at a door or in a narrow passage, give way for him to pass.

10. They that are in dignity, or in office, have in all places the precedence.

11. It is good manners to prefer those to whom we speak before ourselves; especially if they be above us, with whom we ought not to begin.

12. Let your discourse with men of business be short and comprehensive.

13. When visiting the sick, do not be too ready to play the physician.

14. In writing or speaking, give to every person his due title, according to his degree and the custom of the place.

15. Undertake not to teach another in the art which he professes: it savors of arrogance.

16. When a person does all he can, do not blame him, though he does not succeed.

17. Being about to advise or reprehend any one, consider whether it ought to be done in public or in private, presently or at some other time, in what terms to do it; and in reproving, show no signs of choler, but do it with mildness.

18. Mock not, nor jest at any thing serious.

19. Wherein you reprove another, be unblamable yourself; for example is more prevalent than precept.

20. Use no reproachful language against any one, neither curse, nor revile.

21. Be not hasty to believe reports to the disadvantage of others.

22. In your apparel be modest, and endeavor to accommodate nature rather than to procure admiration; keep to the fashions of your equals: such as are civil and orderly with respect to times and places.

23. Play not the peacock, looking every where about your person to see if you be well decked, and if your clothes set handsomely.

24. Associate with persons of good character, if you have a regard for your own; for it is better to be alone, than in bad company.

25. Let your conversation be without malice or envy; and in all cases of passion, admit reason to govern.

26. Be not immodest in urging your friend to discover a secret.

27. Utter not base or frivolous things among grave or learned men; nor introduce deep subjects or difficult questions among the ignorant; nor things hard to be believed.

28. Jest not where none takes pleasure in mirth; laugh not loud, nor at all, without occasion. Deride no man's misfortune.

29. Speak not injurious words, neither in jest nor in earnest; scoff at none, though they give occasion.

30. Be not forward, but friendly and courteous ; the first to salute, hear and answer.

31. Detract not from others ; neither be excessive in commending.

32. Give not advice without being asked.

33. Reprehend not the imperfections of others ; for that belongs to parents, masters and superiors.

34. Gaze not at the marks, or personal blemishes of others ; nor ask how they came.

35. Think before you speak ; pronounce not imperfectly, nor bring out your words too hastily, but orderly and distinctly.

36. When another speaks, be attentive and disturb not the audience. If a person hesitate in his words, do not in general help him out, nor prompt him without being desired ; interrupt him not, nor answer him, till he has done speaking.

37. Treat with men about business only at fit times. Whisper not in company.

38. Make no injurious comparisons ; and if any of the company be commended for a brave or virtuous action, commend not another immediately upon it for a similar action.

39. Be not apt to relate news if you know not the truth of it. In conversing of what you have heard, do not always name your author. Discover not a secret.

40. Be not curious to know the affairs of others ; neither approach those who are speaking in private.

41. Undertake not what you cannot perform ; but be careful to keep your promises.

42. Be not tedious in discourse ; make not many digressions, nor repeat the same thing often.

43. Speak not evil of the absent, for it is unjust.

44. Eat not with greediness ; lean not on the table.

45. Set not yourself at the upper end of the table ; but if the master of the house will have it so, contend not, lest you trouble the company.

46. When you speak of God, or his attributes, let it be seriously and with reverence. Honor and obey your natural parents.

47. Let your recreations be manful, not sinful.

48. Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.

CHAPTER THIRD.

Came very near entering the British Navy at the age of fourteen—attends school at Fredericksburg—becomes a practical surveyor at the age of sixteen—the Indian war dance—continues surveying three years—is appointed Adjutant General of the Militia, with the rank of Major, at the age of nineteen—accompanies his half-brother Lawrence to Barbadoes—Lawrence dies and leaves George the Mount Vernon estate.

While George lived with his half-brother Augustine at Pope's Creek, he was taught the manual exercise by Adjutant Muse, a Westmoreland volunteer, who had been in the service with his other half-brother, Lawrence. He was also instructed in the art of

fencing, by Mr. Van Braam, who afterwards accompanied him against the French as his interpreter.*

In the summer of 1746, George left Mr. Williams's school in Westmoreland county, and returned home to his mother's, in Stafford county. He was then about fourteen years old. Soon after his return he became very desirous to enter the British navy.—His half-brother Lawrence approved his choice. Mr. William Fairfax, the father-in-law of Lawrence, was desirous that George's inclination for the navy should be gratified. They both used their influence with his mother in favor of the project. She at first seemed to consent, though reluctantly.—Lawrence procured him a midshipman's warrant. But as the time of separation drew near, her maternal feelings and more mature reflection caused his mother to waver in her decision. She suggested many objections to the plan; and seemed to listen with more satisfaction to those who opposed, than to those who approved of it. In September, during her suspense upon the subject, George went to see and further consult his brother Lawrence at Mount Vernon, and other friends in the county of Fairfax. On this occasion

* J. Sparks.

he spent a little time at the house of Mr. William Fairfax, who is said to have been an amiable and excellent man. During this visit, George told Mr. Fairfax that he was willing to follow the advice of his brother Lawrence, as his best friend. On his return home, however, George found his mother so decidedly opposed to his going to sea, and her feelings so tenderly affected at the thought of his leaving her, that he gave it up entirely; thinking it his duty to sacrifice his inclinations, in this case, to her happiness. When we consider that this scheme was suited to captivate his youthful fancy, that it was encouraged by some of his most judicious friends, and that the necessary preparations were made for carrying it into effect, it is evident that the sacrifice was great, and a proof of filial affection and dutiful regard highly honorable to him. It must be admitted that the mother's feelings were truly parental, and her wishes reasonable, when it is considered that George was her eldest son, that his father was dead, and that she was left with five younger children.— This decision was probably an event of Providence, upon which the very existence of the United States, as an independent nation, depended.

After this, George lived a part of his time with his brother Lawrence, at Mount Vernon, and a part of the time with his mother, near Fredericksburg, and went to school in that town. Here he made great improvement in the art of surveying.

In March, 1748, being then sixteen years old, he engaged as a surveyor of lands, associated with Mr. George Fairfax, in the employ of Lord Thomas Fairfax. They set out on a surveying tour to the western parts of Virginia, on the 13th of March, accompanied by their assistants, and travelled in a north westerly direction, nearly in range with the Potomac. The first day they rode to the residence of Lord Fairfax, in Frederick county, passing through beautiful groves of sugar trees, and admiring the richness of the land upon the river Shenandoah. The next day they sent on their baggage to a place now called Winchester, and worked industriously for several succeeding days, surveying land in the neighborhood. They then travelled about forty miles further into the country, in a continual rain, swimming their horses over the rivers, which were then very high. Just after the rain ceased and the weather had cleared away, they were agreeably surprised by the

appearance of more than thirty friendly Indians, returning from war. The surveying party remained to witness the performance of their war dance. After clearing a large space of ground and making a fire in the middle of it, the Indians seated themselves around the fire. The speaker then made a grand speech, in which he told them in what manner they were to dance. When the speech was ended, the best dancer jumped up as if suddenly awaked from sleep, and ran and jumped about the ring in a most comical manner. He was soon followed by the others, in a similar style. Their dance was accompanied by appropriate music.— One Indian beat time upon a deer-skin stretched tightly over a vessel half full of water, while another rattled a goard shell with shot in it, and a piece of a horse's tail tied to it, to make it look finely.

One windy night, about a week after, the straw on which Washington was asleep, in the tent, took fire; but one of the party fortunately awoke in time to extinguish it. A few days after, their tent was blown down by the violence of the wind. They occasionally shot a wild turkey or two, which they cooked upon forked sticks instead of spits, and ate upon large chips instead of

plates. After becoming fatigued by traveling about all day, they usually camped out in the forest, and slept with their clothes on all night. During this tour, young Washington and his party surveyed between two and three thousand acres of land, and arrived safely home on the 12th of April, having been absent just one month.

For three years, young Washington was occupied nearly all the time, when the season would permit, in surveying wild lands among the Alleghany mountains and on the southern branches of the river Potomac.* His surveying expeditions were attended with so many hardships and privations, that he was rarely out more than a few weeks at a time, upon any one of them. In the intervals of these expeditions, he made it his home with his brother Lawrence, at Mount Vernon, though he passed a part of his time with his mother.*

In the year 1751, young Washington, though but nineteen years of age, was appointed Adjutant General of the northern division of the Virginia militia, with the rank of Major.†

The health of his brother Lawrence had been declining for several years. He had

* J. Sparks.

† Marshall.

made a voyage to England, and afterwards passed some time at the Bath springs, in Virginia, without receiving any material benefit from either. In the autumn of 1751, he decided to take a voyage to the West Indies, as the last remedy proposed by his physicians. By his request, his brother George, to whom he was much attached, accompanied him on this voyage. They sailed for the island of Barbadoes on the 28th of September, and arrived there about the 3d of November. They procured a pleasant and airy place to board, near the sea shore, and were treated with great hospitality and attention by the principal inhabitants on the island. George was pleased with the richness of the soil, the value of the crops, the variety and excellence of the fruits, and the elevated and beautiful prospects in every direction. He was seized with the small pox on the 17th of November, and it was nearly a month before he recovered from it. On the 22d of November, he embarked on board a vessel called the *Industry*, for Virginia, leaving his brother still at Barbadoes. After a tempestuous passage of more than five weeks, he arrived in Virginia.

Lawrence, not receiving the relief expected from the climate of Barbadoes, went to Bermuda, in March. His health continuing to fail, he returned home in the course of the summer, and died at Mount Vernon, July 26, 1752. George was at Mount Vernon when his brother died, and immediately took charge of his affairs. On opening his will, it was found that he had given to George the Mount Vernon estate, and some valuable lands in Berkley county, Virginia.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

Washington's mission from the Governor of Virginia to the French commandant, at the age of twenty-one—narrowly escapes being killed by an Indian—came near being drowned in the Allegany river—visits Queen Aliquippa.

Information had been received, from time to time, that the French were making encroachments on what was deemed British territory, beyond the Allegany mountains, and that a French army was approaching from Canada to build forts on the Ohio river and to take possession of the whole country. As this territory was supposed to be within the limits of Virginia, the Governor of that

colony* resolved to send a messenger with a letter to the French commandant on the Ohio, to demand of him an answer, to ascertain important facts, and to make useful observations. Major George Washington was selected for this arduous undertaking. His knowledge of the Indians, his habits of living and travelling in the woods acquired on his surveying expeditions, and certain traits in his character, well fitted him for this delicate and important mission, though he was not yet twenty-two years of age.— He was commissioned by the Governor on the 30th of October, 1753, and the same day set out upon his dangerous journey.— On the 14th of November he arrived at the mouth of Wills Creek, now Cumberland, on the river Potomac, having engaged a French interpreter and procured the necessary supply of provisions, horses, &c., on the way. Here he engaged Mr. Gist, an experienced Indian trader, to accompany him; also, an Indian interpreter, and four other men as attendants; and with these men, left the place the next day. The excessive rains and the vast quantities of snow which had fallen, prevented their reaching the river Monongahela till the 22d of November.—

* Dinwiddie.

Here they learned that expresses had been sent down the river a few days before, with information of the French General's death, and the return of the greater part of the French troops into winter quarters.

As the late rains had rendered the rivers impassable without swimming their horses, Washington sent two of his men, with the baggage, in a canoe, about ten miles down the river Monongahela, to meet the rest of the party at the fork of the Ohio, now Pittsburg. As young Washington arrived at the fork before the canoe, he spent some time in viewing the two rivers, Monongahela and Allegany, at and near their junction which forms the Ohio, and examining the land in the fork, which, having the command of both rivers, he thought well situated for a fort.

On the Allegany river, about two miles above the fork, lived Shingiss, King of the Delawares, an Indian chief friendly to the English. Washington, with his attendants, called upon this chief, and invited him to attend a council at a place called Logstown, about twenty miles west of his residence. He accepted the invitation, and accompanied Washington and his men to Logstown.— They arrived about sunset. Washington

found that the friendly chief, called the Half-King, whom he particularly wished to see, was out at his hunting cabin on little Beaver Creek, about fifteen miles distant. Washington, by his Indian interpreter, informed the Half-King's principal man at Logstown that he was a messenger to the French commandant, and was ordered to call upon the Sachems of the Six Nations and inform them of the fact. He then gave him a string of wampum and a twist of tobacco, and desired him to send for the Half-King. The man promised to dispatch a runner for him the next morning. Washington invited him and other chief men to his tent in the evening. They came and staid about an hour. About three o'clock in the afternoon of the next day, the Half-King arrived. He told Washington that the French had lately built two forts about fifteen miles apart, one on Lake Erie, and the other on French Creek, which falls into the Allegany from the north, and near a small lake. He gave Washington a plan of both these forts, of his own drawing. He said the present French commandant was at the fort on French Creek, and that we could not reach in less than five or six nights sleep, in good travelling. The next day,

Washington met several chiefs in council, and delivered a friendly speech to them, in which he briefly stated the object of his visit, and requested an escort of warriors to the French commandant. This was replied to in the same spirit by the Half-King.—Runners were dispatched very early the next morning, for the purpose of assembling a more full council, but not many came.—It was, however, agreed to furnish Washington and his men a convoy, to consist of three chiefs, namely, Half-King, Jeskakake and White Thunder, and one of their best hunters.

They all set out from Logstown on the 30th of November, and travelled in continual bad weather till the 4th of December, when they reached Venango, a settlement at the place where French Creek falls into the Allegany river. This place is now the town of Franklin, the capital of Venango county. They saw the French colors flying at a house in Venango. Washington went immediately to the house to inquire where the commandant resided. Here he found a Captain and three other French officers.—The Captain informed him that he, himself, had the immediate command on the river, but that there was a general officer at the

first fort above, to which he advised him to proceed with his dispatches. He invited Washington and his party to sup with him and his officers, and treated them with great complaisance. The badness of the weather and the winning treatment which the Indians received from the French, combined to detain Washington and his party at Venango three days. Monsieur La Force, commissary of the French stores, with three soldiers, accompanied them up the Creek. The traveling was so bad they did not reach the fort on French Creek till the 12th of December.

The French commandant was the Chevalier de Saint Pierre, a knight of the military order of St. Louis. Washington waited on him soon after his arrival, and was received and conducted to him by the second officer in command. Washington acquainted the Chevalier with his business, and presented his commission and letter. While the commandant was in consultation with his officers upon the communication from the Governor of Virginia, in a private apartment, Washington embraced the opportunity of examining the strength and taking the dimensions of the fort, and of making other observations. He was satisfied that the garrison contained upwards of a hundred soldiers. One of his

people, by his direction, took an account of upwards of two hundred canoes, hauled up and prepared to convey the French forces down the river at the proper season.

On the 14th, the snow was so deep that Washington sent off his horses very lightly loaded, in the care of four of his men, to Venango, having determined to go down himself, with the remainder of his party, in a canoe. Young Washington had to contend with a variety of mild and artful means used to detain his convoy of Indians, and to draw them away from the English interests. He was at length obliged to assume a tone of remonstrance before he could induce the French and Indians to part.—The French commandant, at last, ordered a plentiful store of provisions to be put on board Washington's boat, and appeared very friendly and complaisant. They had a tedious passage down the Creek. They found it extremely crooked. Several times they came near being staved against the rocks. At times they were all hands obliged to get out, and remain in the water half an hour or more, getting over the shoals. At one place, the ice had lodged and blocked up the passage by water, so that they were obliged to carry their boat a quarter of a mile across

a neck of land. They did not reach Venango till the 22d. Here they found their horses.

The next day, when Washington was prepared to leave Venango; he inquired of the Half-King whether he intended to go down with him by land or to go by water. He replied that White Thunder had hurt himself badly, and was sick and unable to walk, and that he must carry him down in a canoe. As Washington found that the Half-King intended to stay behind a few days, he cautioned him against the flatteries of the French. He desired Washington not to be concerned, for he knew the French too well to be influenced by them against the English. He offered to order the young hunter to attend Washington and his party, and procure provisions for them on their journey. He said he should soon be at the forks, and there deliver a speech, to be carried to his Honor the Governor of Virginia. Washington then took leave of the Half-King, and with his party left Venango.

They had not proceeded far, before the horses seemed to be so feeble, and the baggage so heavy for them, that Washington and his party, except the drivers, dismounted and went on foot with packs on their backs

to help forward the baggage. Washington, in an Indian walking dress, continued with his men three days under this arrangement, till he found there was no probability of his reaching home in this manner, in any reasonable season. He then committed the party to the charge of his French interpreter with proper directions, tied himself up in a watch coat, put his necessary papers into his pack with his provisions, took his gun in his hand, and set forward with Mr. Gist, fitted in the same manner, the nearest way home through the woods. The day following, just after they had passed a place called *Murdering Town*, they fell in with a party of Indians in the French interest, who had been lying in wait for them. One of the Indians fired at Washington, not fifteen steps from him, but providentially missed him. They instantly took the fellow into custody, and kept him with them till about nine o'clock in the evening, when they let him go, and walked all night without making any stop, that they might get so far the start of the Indians as to be out of the reach of their pursuit the next day, having no doubt their tracks would be followed as soon as it was light.

The next day they continued travelling till it was quite dark, when they reached the Allegany river about two miles above the forks of the Ohio. There was no way for them to get over the river but upon a raft. The next morning they set about making one, with the assistance of but one poor hatchet, and finished it just after sunset.— The next day they launched it, went on board and pushed off; but before they were half across the river, they were so wedged in between flakes of ice running forcibly down stream, that they expected every moment their raft would sink and themselves perish. Young Washington put out his setting pole to stop the raft, that the ice might pass by it, when the rapidity of the stream threw the ice with so much violence against his pole that it jerked him into the river. He instantly seized hold of one of the raft logs and saved himself from the dashing flakes of ice, by springing to his former station on the raft. In spite of all their efforts they could not get to either shore; but were obliged to quit their raft and pass from one mass of ice to another, till they reached a small island in the river. Here they spent the night. The cold was so extremely severe that Mr. Gist had all

his fingers and part of his toes frozen. They left the island the next morning, on the ice, without difficulty, and went to the house of a trader, on the Monongahela, a few miles distant. About three miles from this house, there was an Indian settlement on the spot where the Monongahela and Youghiogany rivers unite, where the Indian Queen Alliquippa held her rude court. She had expressed great concern that Washington and his party had passed her by without attention, on his way to the French fort; and, as he was now waiting for horses, (which, by the by, he failed to obtain,) he took this opportunity to make a visit to her majesty. Though it is evident that Queen Alliquippa, like persons of similar rank and birth in Europe, was very tenacious of the respect due to royalty, we are not informed by Washington, with what particular marks of attention she received him. We may, however, form some idea of the style which he found prevalent at court, from the nature of the present which he made her. He presented her with a box coat.

About thirty miles from this Indian settlement, Washington bought a fresh horse, rode on to Wills Creek, and reached Williamsburg on the 16th of January, 1754.—

He immediately waited upon the Governor, delivered his letter from the French commandant, together with a journal of his proceedings and observations during the tour. This journal was published in England, and has been several times reprinted in this country. Major Washington thus completed his perilous expedition, and accomplished the objects of it in such a faithful and able manner as gave entire satisfaction.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

Major Washington, at the age of twenty-two, is appointed to command the regular Virginia forces, consisting of two companies—being increased to six companies, he is raised to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and made second in command—his modesty—the fort, just begun at the fork of the Ohio, surrenders to the French—Washington attacks and defeats a party of French.

By the then existing law of Virginia, the militia could not be required to march more than five miles beyond the boundary line of the colony. For this reason, if for no other, the militia alone could not be depended upon for the defence of the colony. After Washington's return, the Governor and council of Virginia determined to raise

two companies, of one hundred men each, by enlistment, and send them to erect and defend a fort at the fork of the Ohio, now Pittsburg, that being the spot pointed out by Washington as well situated for a fort. Major Washington, then but twenty-two years old, was appointed to command these two companies. He was to enlist one of the companies himself, and he did enlist about fifty men. Captain Trent, having partly filled the other company in the back settlement, was ordered immediately to the place of destination. It was soon determined, however, to increase this force to three hundred men, and to divide them into six companies. In a letter to a friend of his, then a member of the Governor's council, Major Washington says: "The command of this whole force I neither expect nor desire; for I must be impartial enough to confess, it is a charge too great for my youth and inexperience. Knowing this, I have too sincere a love for my country to undertake that which may tend to the prejudice of it."

Young Washington was, however, raised to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and made second in command. He left Alexandria with his troops, for the frontier, on the 2d of April, 1754, and being joined by a small

detachment in his route, arrived at Wills Creek on the 20th, with one hundred and fifty men. He was here met by Captain Trent's ensign, Mr. Ward, directly from the fort just begun at the fork of the Ohio, with the unpleasant information that he had been obliged to surrender to a French force of one thousand men, with eighteen pieces of cannon, on the 17th of April. He said that the Captain and the Lieutenant (Frazier) were both absent at the time, and that the whole number of men under his command was but forty-one. He stated that the French commander approached near the fort, halted his troops, and sent in an officer with a summons to surrender, allowing him but one hour to consider of it, and directing him to come to the French camp at the expiration of the hour, with his determination in writing. He asked the Half-King, who was in the fort at the time, what it was best to do. The chief advised him to inform the French that he was not an officer of rank, nor invested with power to answer their summons, and request them to wait till his commander should arrive. He accordingly went with this reply to the French camp, accompanied by the Half-King; but the French commander refused to wait, telling

them that he must have an immediate and decisive answer, or he should take possession of the fort by force. He then agreed to surrender, with liberty to depart with his men the next day. The French commander invited the ensign to supper in the evening, and treated him with much civility. The seizure of this post was considered by the British, at the time, the first open act of hostility in the memorable French war which followed it. The French fortified the post strongly, and called it Fort Du Quesne.

Colonel Washington considered that the British territory was now actually invaded, and that it was his duty, in compliance with his orders, to march forward prepared to meet the invading foe. A council of war was held, which confirmed this opinion, and resolved to proceed to the junction of Red Stone Creek with the river Monongahela, thirty-seven miles south of Fort Du Quesne, there build a fort and wait for reinforcements. Colonel Fry, the chief in command, being detained by bad health, Lieutenant Colonel Washington with his one hundred and fifty men, moved on through the wilderness and over the mountains with all possible dispatch. He first sent forward sixty men to prepare a

passage by mending the road, and in some places making a new one ; and on the 1st of May, followed them with the main body. In the course of the march, the friendly Indians brought to Washington frequent reports of French scouts being seen in the woods. When he had advanced about fifty miles beyond Wills Creek, he met a messenger from the Half-King, informing him that a French force (how large he could not tell) was on its march to attack the English, and warning him to be on his guard. This induced Washington to fall back a few miles to a favorable place for meeting the enemy, called the Great Meadows. Here he immediately employed his men in clearing away the bushes and throwing up an intrenchment, and sent a small party to look out for the enemy and observe their strength and motions. But the party returned without seeing any thing of them. The troops were, however, alarmed in the night, and were under arms during the latter part of it.

On the morning of May 27th, an English trader who lived in the neighborhood, came to the camp from his residence, where a detachment of fifty Frenchmen, he said, had been seen the day before at noon. He added that he saw their tracks himself about five

miles distant. Washington immediately sent out seventy-five men in pursuit of this party ; but they returned without discovering it. Washington sent a messenger to the Half-King, who was encamped with some of his people about six miles distant. This messenger returned about nine o'clock in the evening, with information from the Half-King that he had seen the tracks of two Frenchmen across the road, which had been traced to an obscure part of the woods, and that he thought the main body of them must be concealed at no great distance.—Washington, suspecting a design to surprise him, set out that night with forty men for the Indian's camp. The night was dark and rainy, and they often lost the path and were unable to find it again for fifteen or twenty minutes. They, however, arrived at the Indian's camp before sunrise. The Half-King agreed "to go hand in hand with their brothers the English," (as they called them,) "and strike the French." Accordingly they set out together, and proceeded through the woods in single file, after the manner of the Indians, till they came to the place where the tracks were. The Half-King then sent two Indians to follow these tracks again, till they should find the very

spot where the enemy lay. The two Indians soon discovered them about half a mile from the road, in a very retired place, surrounded by rocks. The men were immediately formed for the attack. They then advanced, with Washington at their head, till they came very near the French. The moment the French discovered them, they seized their arms. Washington gave the order to fire, and a brisk engagement ensued, which continued about fifteen minutes. The French were defeated with the loss of their whole party, except one who escaped, ten men being killed, including Jumonville, their commander, one wounded and twenty-one taken prisoners. Colonel Washington's loss was one man killed, and a Lieutenant and two privates wounded. As the French directed their fire chiefly at Washington's men, the Indians received no injury. This skirmish took place on the 28th of May, 1754, at about seven o'clock in the morning. It was the first battle in which Washington had ever been engaged.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

Battle of the Great Meadows—vote of thanks to Colonel Washington and his officers—disapproving of the arrangement of the Virginia troops, he retires from the service.

Colonel Fry died at Wills Creek on the 31st of May. By his death, the command of the expedition devolved on Washington. Reinforcements were soon forwarded, so that the whole number composing the Virginia regiment under his immediate command, was three hundred men. There was also with him an independent company from South Carolina, consisting of about one hundred men. With this force Colonel Washington advanced slowly and cautiously beyond the Great Meadows, employing his soldiers in repairing the road, and sending out scouting parties to watch the motions of the enemy. He also sent a party forward to clear a passage towards the mouth of Red Stone Creek, the place of the intended fort. He also held councils with several Indian chiefs who came to him for that purpose, heard and delivered speeches, exchanged belts of wampum, and went through the usual ceremonies on such occasions. But all this was to little purpose; for some of the Indians were spies from the French, and

the only motive of others was to obtain presents of goods and provisions. In this mode of gaining friends, the French were more successful than the English, as they were better supplied with such articles as the Indians wanted.

While these operations were going on, reports were continually brought in by French deserters and Indians that reinforcements had arrived at Fort Du Quesne, and that a large force would soon come out to attack the English. These accounts came from many different sources, some of which were so authentic that a council of war was held, in which it was unanimously resolved that the army should return to the Great Meadows, there fortify themselves in the best manner they could, and wait for a supply of provisions and reinforcements. The retreat immediately commenced. They had so few horses that the Colonel loaded his own horse with ammunition and other public stores, marched on foot himself, and paid the soldiers from his own purse for carrying his private baggage. Other officers followed his example. The troops were short of provisions, and having to carry their baggage on their backs and draw nine swivels over a very broken road, they did not reach the Great

Meadows till the 1st of July. The Colonel immediately sent off an express to hasten on the expected supplies and reinforcements, but they did not arrive. He set his men to felling trees, preparing and drawing together logs, and raising and strengthening the breastworks. This entrenchment was called *Fort Necessity*, on account of the circumstances attending the erection and original use of it.

On the third of July, early in the morning, an alarm was given by a sentinel who had been wounded by the enemy. At nine o'clock, intelligence was received that the whole body of the French, amounting to nine hundred men, was only four miles distant. They were commanded by M. De Villiers, brother of Jumonville. At eleven o'clock they approached the fort, and began to fire, at the distance of six hundred yards, but without effect. Colonel Washington had drawn up his men on the open and level ground outside of the trenches, awaiting the attack, which he supposed would be made immediately, having ordered his men to reserve their fire till the enemy were so near that it would certainly do execution. But the French kept up a distant firing from the woods. Washington considered this as a

stratagem to draw his men into the woods and there take them at a disadvantage. He therefore maintained his position till he found that the French did not incline to leave the woods and attack the fort by assault, as he had thought they would, considering their superiority of numbers. He then drew his men back within the trenches, and gave them orders to fire as they found favorable opportunities of doing so with effect. The French and Indians remained on the side of a piece of rising ground near the fort, and sheltered by the trees, kept up a brisk fire of musketry upon it, but never appeared upon the open plain below.

In this way, the battle continued till eight o'clock in the evening, when the French called out and proposed a parley. Suspecting this to be a mere feint in order to procure the admission of a French officer into the fort to spy out his condition, the Colonel at first declined the proposal; but when the call was repeated, with the request that an officer might be sent to them, and with the pledge of their parol of honor for his safety, he sent out Captain Van Braam, the only person under his command who could speak French, excepting the Chevalier De Payrouny, an ensign in the Virginia regiment.

who was dangerously wounded and disabled. Van Braam returned, and brought with him M. De Villiers and the proposed articles of capitulation. These he read and interpreted. After making some alterations in the articles, by mutual agreement, both parties signed them about midnight.

By the terms of the capitulation, the whole garrison was to march out of the fort the next morning, with the honors of war, their drums beating and their colors flying ; and to return home with every thing in their possession, excepting their artillery, unmolested by the French or the savages. As the French had killed all the horses and cattle, Colonel Washington had no means of carrying away his heavy baggage and stores ; and the French agreed that a guard might be left to protect them, till horses could be sent to take them away. It was agreed that the prisoners taken at the skirmish with Jumonville should be returned ; and to secure the performance of this article, Captain Van Braam and Captain Stobo were delivered up to the French to be retained by them as hostages. Early the next morning, Colonel Washington began his march from the fort in good order ; but he had not proceeded far, when a body of one hundred

Indians came upon him and could hardly be restrained from attacking his men. They pilfered the baggage and did other mischief. He proceeded on, however, with as much speed as possible, till he arrived at Wells Creek settlement, now Cumberland, in the State of Maryland. Thence he proceeded to Williamsburg, and communicated to the Governor in person the events of the campaign. Much dissatisfaction was expressed with some of the articles of capitulation, when they were made public. The legislature of Virginia, however, after maturely considering them, passed a vote of thanks to Colonel Washington and his officers for their brave defence of the country. Indeed, all the proceedings of the campaign, though not finally successful, were generally approved and applauded.

- The exact number engaged in the action at the Great Meadows, cannot be ascertained.
- According to a return made by Colonel Washington himself, the Virginia regiment, including officers, consisted of three hundred and five men, of which twelve were killed and forty-three wounded. The company of South Carolinians was said to contain about one hundred; but the number of them killed and wounded is not known. The

French force was probably not far from nine hundred. M. De Villiers says he left Fort Du Quesne with five hundred Frenchmen and eleven Indians. The number of French is probably correct; but the Indians were much more numerous when they arrived at the scene of action.

Although there was at this time a disagreement between the Governor and the Legislature of Virginia, which prevented the appropriation of money for the service, the Governor and his counsel resolved to renew the contest with the French without delay. When Washington was informed of this, he expostulated so warmly against attempting such an enterprise, without money, men, or provisions, that it was abandoned.

The Assembly met in October, 1754, and granted £20,000. The Governor received from England £10,000 in specie, with the promise of as much more, and two thousand fire arms. The Governor and his counsel then resolved that the army should be divided into ten independent companies, of one hundred men each, and should contain no officer above the rank of Captain. Washington, disapproving of this singular arrangement as unfavorable to the interest of the service, retired from the army to his farm,

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

Is invited by General Braddock to join his expedition as a volunteer—accepts the invitation—Battle of Monongahela—Washington conducts the retreat with ability, and retains the confidence of the public.

On the 20th of February, 1755, General Braddock arrived in Virginia, from England, as Commander in Chief of all the military forces in North-America. He brought with him two Regiments of the British Army, consisting of five hundred men each. One of them was commanded by Sir Peter Halket, and the other by Colonel Dunbar. These were accompanied by a proper train of artillery and sufficient military supplies and provisions. The General made his first head quarters at Alexandria. He addressed, through his Aid-de-Camp, a polite letter to Colonel Washington, inviting him, as he had declined any military command under the Virginia regulations, to join his family as a volunteer, and accompany him upon his intended expedition against Fort Du Quesne, as one of his aids, and desiring him to consult his own pleasure and convenience, as to the particular time of joining the army. Colonel Washington accepted this invitation. General Braddock marched from Alexandria for Fort Cumberland at the mouth of Wills

Creek on the 20th of April. Colonel Washington left Mount Vernon on the 23d, and overtook the army in a few days at Fredericktown, in Virginia. The army arrived at Fort Cumberland about the middle of May. It then consisted of more than two thousand men. About one thousand of them were colonial troops. The army was detained at this post three weeks; nor could it then have moved on, but for the personal exertions of Benjamin Franklin, and his influence among the Pennsylvanian farmers, in procuring horses and wagons, to transport the artillery, provisions, and baggage. During the detention of the army at Fort Cumberland, Colonel Washington was dispatched to Williamsburg, in the eastern part of Virginia, to obtain £4000 in money, for the use of the army, and to bring it on to the camp. He promptly and successfully executed this commission, taking with him at Winchester, on his return, a sufficient guard of militia through the most unfrequented and dangerous part of the route.

About the first of June, a detachment was sent forward to open the roads as far as a place called Little Meadows, about twenty miles beyond Fort Cumberland, and there to erect a small Fort. The main body

soon followed this detachment, and when they came up with it, the whole army was divided into two divisions. The advanced division under General Braddock, consisted of about twelve hundred men. The other division, consisting of about eight hundred men under Colonel Dunbar, was left in the rear to proceed with the baggage by slow marches. Washington says in a letter to his brother John Augustine, (the father of Judge Lund Washington,) written on the march, that the advance of the first division of the army, though retarded by many real obstacles and difficulties, was yet unnecessarily slow, in consequence of halting to level too many mole hills, and to build bridges over too many brooks. Colonel Washington accompanied the advanced division until a fever with which he was taken on the march became so violent, that he was obliged to fall in the rear, into Colonel Dunbar's division.

General Braddock arrived with his division, all in fine health and spirits, at the junction of the Monongahela and Youghiogany rivers on the 8th of July. On the same day Colonel Washington, though but partially recovered from his fever, reached that place in a covered wagon, and joined

the advanced division. Owing to a bend in the Monongahela, it was necessary for the army in approaching Fort Du Quesne, now about fifteen miles distant, to ford the river twice. The remarkable dryness of the season rendered this practicable. Early in the morning of the 9th of July, all things were in readiness, and the whole train, a little below the mouth of the Youghiogany, passed through the river Monongahela, and proceeded in perfect order along the southern margin of it. Colonel Washington, though feeble, attended the General on horseback. He was often heard to say, in the course of his after life, that one of the most beautiful spectacles he had ever seen, was the display of the British troops on this eventful morning. Every man was neatly dressed in full uniform. The soldiers were arranged in columns and marched in exact order. The sun gleamed upon their burnished arms. The river flowed tranquilly on their right, and the deep forest often overshadowed them on their left. When they had marched about five miles, they arrived to the second crossing place, ten miles from Fort Du Quesne. They halted a little, and then began to ford the river and gain its northern bank. As soon as they had crossed, they came to a level

plain, nearly half a mile in extent. At the end of the plain was a piece of gently rising ground, covered with trees, bushes and long grass. The road to Fort Du Quesne led across this plain. It then led up the rising ground, between two ravines from eight to ten feet deep, and of sufficient extent to contain five hundred men each. Owing to the trees, bushes and high grass, these ravines could not be seen from the road, nor without coming within a few feet of them. By the order of march, a body of three hundred men under Lieutenant Colonel Gage, afterwards commander of the British forces in Boston at the beginning of the revolution, formed the advanced party. This was followed by about two hundred. Next came General Braddock with the main body, the artillery and baggage. He sent out no scouts nor guards in advance and on the wings of the army to make discoveries and prevent a surprise. Washington advised him to proceed more cautiously, but he was self-confident and disregarded the advice.

At 1 o'clock P. M. the whole army had crossed the river; and almost at the same moment a sharp firing was heard upon the advanced parties, who were now ascending the rising ground. A heavy discharge of

musketry poured in upon their front, gave them the first notice that an enemy was near. This was suddenly followed by another discharge upon their right flank.— These were followed by others in continual and rapid succession. They were filled with the greater consternation because no enemy was in sight, and the fire seemed to come from an invisible foe. They fired, however, in their turn, but at random and without effect. The General speedily advanced to the relief of the detachments; but before he could reach them, they gave way and fell back upon the artillery and other columns, causing extreme confusion, and striking the whole mass with such a panic that no order could afterwards be restored. The yell of the savages with which the woods resounded, struck terror into the hearts of the British soldiers, and added to the consternation. The General and his officers behaved with the utmost courage. They made every effort to rally the men and bring them to order, but all in vain.— In this state they continued nearly three hours, huddling together in confused bodies, firing irregularly, shooting down their own officers and comrades, and doing little or no harm to the enemy. The Virginians were

the only troops who seemed to retain their senses. They behaved with bravery and resolution. They adopted the Indian mode, and fought each man for himself behind a tree. This was forbidden by the General, who endeavored to form the men into platoons and columns, as if he were manœvering them upon the plains of Flanders.— During all this time, the French and Indians concealed in the ravines and behind trees, kept up a continual and deadly discharge of musketry, singling out their objects, taking deliberate aim, and producing a carnage almost unparalleled in the annals of modern warfare. More than half of that whole army which had crossed the river in such proud array only three hours before, were either killed or wounded. General Braddock, after having five horses shot under him, had received a mortal wound, and many of his best officers had fallen by his side. Sir Peter Halket was killed upon the spot. Colonel Washington had two horses shot under him, and his clothes were shot through in several places. The bodies left on the field were stripped and scalped by the Indians. All the artillery, ammunition, provisions, baggage, every thing in the train of the army fell into the enemy's hands,

and were given up to be pillaged by the savages.

When the battle was over, and the remnant of the army had gained in their flight the opposite bank of the river, Colonel Washington was dispatched by the General to meet Colonel Dunbar, and order forward wagons for the wounded with all possible speed ; but they could not be procured till after the wounded had suffered much from pain, fatigue and hunger. The General was at first brought off the field in a cart.— He was then set on horseback, but being unable to ride, was carried by the soldiers. They reached Dunbar's camp, near the Great Meadows, to which the panic had already extended. A day was passed there in great confusion. General Braddock died on the 13th, and was buried in the road, for the purpose of concealing his body from the Indians. The spot is still pointed out within a few yards of the present national road, about a mile west of the site of Fort Necessity, at the Great Meadows, in Pennsylvania. On the 17th, the sick and wounded arrived at Fort Cumberland on Wills Creek, and were soon after joined by Colonel Dunbar with the remnant of the army. The French sent out a party as far as Dunbar's

camp and destroyed every thing that had been left behind.

As to the numbers engaged in the battle of Monongahela, on the side of the French, Washington conjectured, as appears by his letters, that they amounted to no more than three hundred. Doctor Franklin, in his account of the battle, considers them as not exceeding four hundred at most.

It appears by the French narratives of this battle, that while the commandant of Fort Du Quesne, considering his force too small to encounter his approaching enemy, was hesitating what measures to adopt, M. De Beaujeu, a Captain in the French service, obtained from his commandant a detachment of French troops, with leave to advance with them and meet the enemy on their march. After much persuasion, Beaujeu induced a considerable party of Indians to join him. He began his march at an early hour on the morning of the 9th of July, intending to make a stand at the second fording place, there to annoy the English while passing the river, and then to retreat and make another stand at the rising ground where the whole contest actually took place. Captain Beaujeu and his

party did not, however, arrive quite in time to make a stand at the ford, and thus failed to carry the first part of their plan into execution. They however immediately placed themselves in ambush, partly in front and partly concealed in the ravines flanking the road up the rising ground, and there waited till Braddock's advanced columns came up. The French gave the first fire in front.— This was repelled by so heavy a discharge from the British, that the Indians thought it came from artillery, and showed symptoms of wavering and retreat. At this moment M. De Beaujeu was killed. M. Dumas immediately took the command, rallied the Indians with great presence of mind, ordered his officers to lead them to the wings, while, with the French troops, he maintained the position in front. This order was promptly obeyed; the attack became general, and the English columns got into confusion.

As to the French accounts of their numbers, the highest states them at two hundred and fifty French and Canadians and six hundred and forty Indians, and the lowest at two hundred and thirty French and Canadians and six hundred Indians. A

medium between the two will make the whole number under De Beaujeu eight hundred and sixty. The French admit, including Indians, thirty-three killed and thirty-four wounded.

When these French statements, the nature of the ground, and the mismanagement of General Braddock are duly considered, the result of the action will not appear very surprising. That the English should say "they were fighting with an invisible foe," and that "they could only tell where the enemy were by the smoke of their muskets," is no mystery, for it was literally true. Had Braddock known the position of his enemy, and raked the ravines with his artillery, or charged through them with the bayonet, they would have been cleared immediately.

Colonel Washington lost no ground in the confidence of the public by Braddock's defeat. It was the general opinion that if *he* had been commander, the defeat would not have happened. By his firm conduct during the action, and his skilful management of the retreat, he gained additional reputation.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

Anecdote—Washington is appointed to command the Virginia forces—his visit to Boston—commands the advance division at the taking of Fort Du Quesne—resigns his military commission—marries—devotes himself chiefly to agricultural pursuits till called to take command of the American armies in the war of Independence.

About fifteen years after Braddock's defeat, as Washington was exploring wild lands near the Ohio river with a party of woodmen, a company of Indians came to them with an interpreter, headed by an aged and venerable chief. This chief told the party that, at the battle of Monongahela, he had singled out Colonel Washington as a conspicuous object, fired his rifle at him many times, and directed his young warriors to do the same, but to his utter astonishment, none of their balls took effect. He was then persuaded that the young man was under the special guardianship of the Great Spirit, and stopped firing at him any longer. He said he had come a great way to pay his respects to a man who was the peculiar favorite of Heaven, and could never die in battle.*

About a fortnight after Washington returned home from Braddock's defeat, he

* J. Sparks.

was appointed to the chief command of the Virginia forces, now increased to sixteen companies, with authority to appoint his own officers, together with an aid-de-camp and Secretary. In this command he continued three years, defending with energy and resolution three hundred and sixty miles of frontier against the continual incursions of a warlike and a savage foe, though furnished with very inadequate means for the arduous undertaking. His discipline was reasonable and steady, but rigid. Quarreling and fighting, drunkenness, card playing and profane swearing were promptly punished.

In March, 1756, Colonel Washington went with his aid to Boston on military business with General Shirley. He was treated with much politeness and attention at Boston. He attended with interest the proceedings of the Legislature of Massachusetts, and visited Castle William and other places worthy of a stranger's notice. On his return home, he passed through Providence, Newport, New London, New York, and Philadelphia, and spent several days in each of the two last mentioned cities.

The design of the British to carry the war into Canada, being known to the French Governor of Canada, he recalled the greater part of the French troops from the Ohio river. Only about five hundred men were left for the defence of the French possessions.

In 1758, another expedition marched against Fort Du Quesne, under the command of General Forbes. Colonel Washington commanded the advanced division of this army, which was sent forward to clear and prepare the way for the main body.—The night before the expedition reached Fort Du Quesne, the French, amounting to about five hundred men, set the Fort on fire, embarked on board their boats by the light of it, and sailed down the Ohio; so that the army had nothing to do but to take possession of the spot where the Fort stood. This they did on the 25th of November, 1758. General Forbes called the place Pittsburg, in honor of Mr. Pitt.

Immediately after his return to Virginia from this expedition, Colonel Washington resigned his military commission. On the 6th of January, 1759, at the age of twenty-seven, he married Martha Custis, the widow

of Daniel Parke Custis, and daughter of John Dandridge. Colonel Washington, though absent at the time, was elected a member of the Virginia Assembly by a large majority over three active rival candidates. He attended the session of the Assembly held in the month of February. The house had resolved, without the knowledge of Washington, to return their thanks to him in a public manner for the distinguished services he had rendered his country. This duty devolved on Mr. Robinson, the Speaker. As soon as Colonel Washington took his seat, the Speaker, following the impulse of his feelings, discharged the duty assigned him with dignity, but with such warmth and strength of expression as entirely confounded the young hero. He rose to express his acknowledgments for the honor done him, but such was his trepidation and confusion that he could not give distinct utterance to a single sentence. He blushed, stammered and trembled for a moment, when the Speaker relieved him by a stroke of address that would have done honor to Louis the Eighteenth in his proudest and happiest moment. "Sit down, Colonel Washington," said he, with

a conciliating smile, "your modesty is equal to your valor; and that surpasses the power of any language that I possess."*

When the session closed, the Colonel repaired, with Mrs. Washington, to his residence at Mount Vernon. Here he enjoyed the pleasures of domestic life and his favorite agricultural occupations for sixteen years, until called by the voice of his country to take command of the American armies at the commencement of the war of the Revolution. He cultivated and improved his lands with remarkable judgment. He conducted his business upon a regular system. Economy was observed through every department of it. His accounts were inspected weekly. The divisions of his farm were numbered, an exact account was kept of the produce of each lot together with the expense of cultivating it, so that the profit or loss of any crop as well as the relative advantages of different modes of husbandry might be seen at one view.

During Washington's retreat from military life he was a magistrate of the county in which he resided, and frequently a member of the Virginia Legislature. He was hos-

* Wirt's Life of Patrick Henry, page 45.

pitable and charitable ; a friend to the church in the parish where he lived, and ever ready to do all in his power to promote the interests of morality and religion. He was indeed a friend of his country and a friend of mankind.

APPENDIX.

The first Congress of the United Colonies met at Philadelphia in 1774. Washington was a leading member of that body, and took an active part in opposition to the principles assumed by the then British administration and parliament in relation to the American colonies

He was unanimously elected by Congress, General and Commander-in-chief of the United Colonies and of all their forces. When the President of Congress communicated this election, Washington thus addressed him :

“ Mr. President—Although I am truly sensible of the high honor done me by this appointment, I feel a consciousness that my abilities and military experience may not be equal to the extensive trust. However, as the Congress desire it, I will enter upon the momentous duty and exert every power I possess in their service and in support of our glorious cause. I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their approbation.

“ But unless some unlucky event should happen unfavorable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in the room that I this day declare, with the utmost sincerity, I do not think myself equal to the command with which I am honored.

I beg leave, sir, to assure the Congress, that, as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment, at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit from it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses. These, I doubt not, the Congress will discharge, and that is all I desire."

Under what privations, difficulties and discouragements, Washington led our fathers through their revolutionary struggle, to victory and national independence, is well known. His agency in establishing that independence upon the basis of union in a national constitution, and his excellent administration of the government as the first President of the United States under that constitution, is equally well known.

Washington was exactly six feet high. His limbs were well formed and indicated strength. His eyes were greyish, and his hair of a brown color. His complexion was light, and his countenance serene and thoughtful.

His manners were graceful, manly and dignified. His general appearance never failed to engage the respect and esteem of all who approached him. He possessed the most perfect self-government, and in a remarkable degree the faculty of hiding the weaknesses inseparable from human nature. He ever bore his distinguished honors with meekness and equanimity.

Reserved but not haughty in his disposition, he was accessable to all but he unbosomed himself only to his confidential friends.

He was not so much distinguished for brilliancy of intellect, as for industry of application, solidity of judgment and consummate prudence of conduct. He was not so eminent for any single quality as for a union of great, amiable, and good qualities, rarely combined in the same character.—*Bancroft's Life of Washington.*

Mr. Stewart, the eminent portrait painter, used to say there were features in the face of Washington, different from any he had ever observed in any other human being. The sockets for the eyes were larger than he had ever met with before, and the upper part of his nose broader.

He always spoke with great diffidence, and sometimes hesitated for a word; but it was always to find one well adapted to his meaning. His language was manly and expressive.

Few persons ever found themselves for the first time in the presence of Washington, without being impressed with a degree of veneration and awe; nor did those emotions subside on a closer acquaintance; on the contrary, his person and deportment were such as tended rather to augment them. The whole range of history does not present to our view a character upon which we can dwell with such entire and unmixed admira-

tion. The long life of Washington is unstained by a single blot. He was indeed a man of such rare endowments, and such a fortunate temperament, that every action he performed was equally exempted from the charge of vice or weakness. Whatever he said or did, or wrote, was stamped with a striking and peculiar propriety. His qualities were so happily blendid and so nicely harmonized, that the result was a great and perfect whole. The passions of his mind and the dispositions of his heart were admirably suited to each other. His views, though liberal, were never extravagant. His virtues, though comprehensive and beneficent, were discriminating, judicious and practical.

Yet his character, though regular and uniform, possessed none of the littleness which may sometimes belong to these descriptions of men. It formed a majestic pile, the effect of which was not impaired, but improved by order and symmetry. There was nothing in it to dazzle by wildness, and surprise by eccentricity. It was of a higher species of moral beauty. It contained every thing great and elevated, but it had no false and tinsel ornament. It was not the model cried up by fashion and circumstance : its excellence was adapted to the true and just moral taste, incapable of change from the varying accidents of manners, of opinions and times. General Washington is not the idol of a day, but the hero of ages !

Placed in circumstances of the most trying difficulty at the commencement of the American contest, he accepted that situation which was pre-eminent in danger

and responsibility. His perseverance overcame every obstacle ; his moderation conciliated every opposition ; his genius supplied every resource ; his enlarged views could plan, revise, and improve every branch of civil and military operation. He had the superior courage which can act or can forbear to act, as policy dictates, careless of the reproaches of ignorance either in power or out of power. He knew how to conquer by waiting, in spite of obloquy, for the moment of victory ; and he merited true praise by despising undeserved censure. In the most arduous moments of the contest, his prudent firmness proved the salvation of the cause which he supported.

His conduct was, on all occasions, guided by the most pure disinterestedness. Far superior to low and grovelling motives, he seemed even to be uninfluenced by that ambition which has justly been called the instinct of great souls. He acted ever as if his country's welfare, and that alone, was the moving spring. His excellent mind needed not even the stimulus of ambition, or the prospect of fame. Glory was a secondary consideration. He performed great actions ; he persevered in a course of laborious utility, with an equanimity that neither sought distinction, nor was flattered by it. His reward was in the consciousness of his own rectitude, and in the success of his patriotic efforts.

As his elevation to the chief power was the unbiassed choice of his countrymen, his exercise of it was agreeable to the purity of its origin. As he had neither solicited nor usurped dominion, he had neither to contend

with the opposition of rivals, nor the revenge of enemies. As his authority was undisputed, so it required no jealous precautions, no rigorous severity. His government was mild and gentle; it was beneficent and liberal; it was wise and just. His prudent administration consolidated and enlarged the dominion of an infant republic. In voluntarily resigning the magistracy which he had filled with such distinguished honor, he enjoyed the unequalled satisfaction of leaving to the state he had contributed to establish, the fruits of his wisdom and the example of his virtues.

It is some consolation, amidst the violence of ambition and the criminal thirst of power, of which so many instances occur around us, to find a character whom it is honorable to admire, and virtuous to imitate. A conqueror, for the freedom of his country! a legislator, for its security! a magistrate, for its happiness! His glories were never sullied by those excesses into which the highest qualities are apt to degenerate. With the greatest virtues, he was exempt from the corresponding vices. He was a man in whom the elements were so mixed that "Nature might have stood up to all the world" and owned him as her work. His fame, bounded by no country, will be confined to no age. The character of Washington, which his contemporaries admire, will be transmitted to posterity; and the memory of his virtues, will remain while patriotism and virtue are esteemed among men.—*From an English publication.*

EARLY LIFE
OF
WASHINGTON.



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